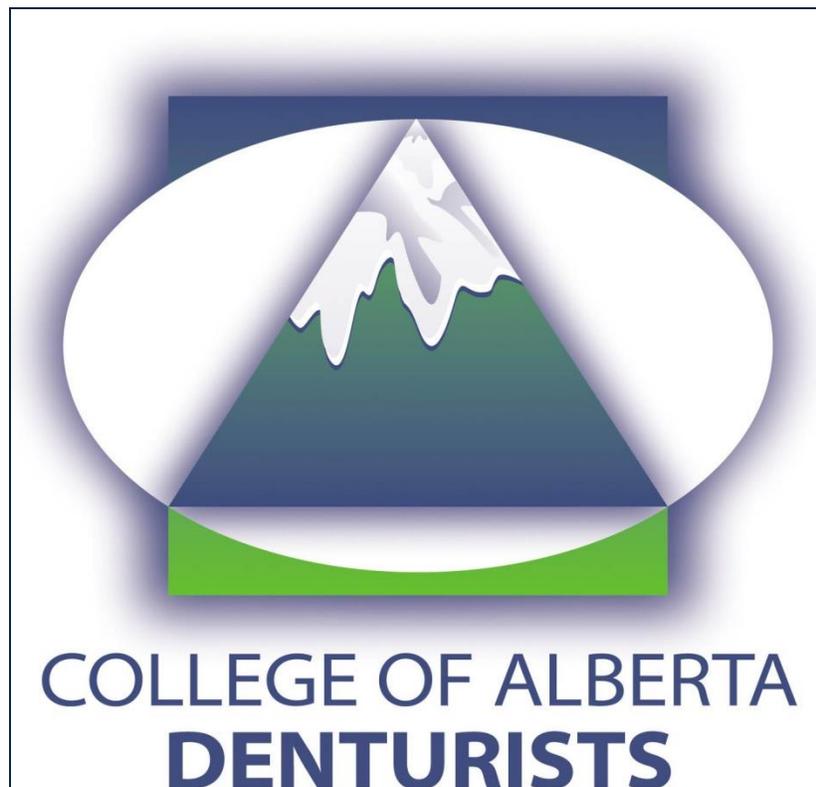


Standards of Practice



December 15, 2016

With addition of Standard 4: Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries - March 18, 2019

Standards of Practice for the Denturist Profession

Denturists have been granted the privileged status of healthcare professional. With this status comes the legal and moral obligation to demonstrate the skills, behaviours and qualities associated with professionalism.

The Standards of Practice is a set of doctrines that establishes standards of professional conduct expected of denturists in fulfilling duties to their patients, the public, and the profession.

These core Standards affirm and clarify principles that are definitive to the professional and ethical provision of denturist services and represent acceptable requirements for determining the quality of dental care a patient receives.

Denturists are committed to the development and implementation of practice standards through the ongoing acquisition, critical application, and evaluation of relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Standards of Practice provide a strong framework under which the profession can continue to grow, adapt and strengthen now and in the future.

Considerations

The Standards of Practice for denturists were initially developed to fulfil the requirements of the enabling legislation. The College of Alberta Denturists had a Standards of Practice in place when the *Denturists Profession Regulation* was proclaimed in 2002.

With changes to legislation and the profession, due diligence necessitates a review and revision of Standards of Practice by the College. These Standards of Practice are the result of such process and legislative mandate. In revising the original Standards of Practice, the College considered the following:

1. Denturists are independent healthcare providers who work cooperatively in conjunction with other healthcare professionals to provide patients with quality healthcare services.
2. Denturists in their practice, do one or more of the following:
 - a) Assess, diagnose and treat persons who are missing some, none, or all of their natural teeth;
 - b) Design, construct, repair, alter and fit any complete or partial denture for the purpose of restoring and maintaining function and appearance;
 - c) teach, manage and conduct research in the science, techniques and practice of denturism;
 - d) Provide the restricted activities authorized by the *Denturists Profession Regulation*;
 - e) Provide non-restricted dental services; and
 - f) Provide the professional administration of clinical, laboratory, and business practices related to the profession of denturism.
3. Pursuant to the Alberta *Health Professions Act* and the *Denturists Profession Regulation* enacted thereunder, denturists are members of a self-regulating profession. Denturists are responsible for providing safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care within the legal framework of the legislation.
4. Denturists have the inherent responsibility to ensure that their practice settings, procedures and overall delivery of services meet or exceed minimal standards that are expected of a primary healthcare provider.
5. Denturists have the inherent responsibility to remain current in their practice through life-long learning. Denturists must provide treatment grounded in evidence-based practice, and must ensure that patients are informed of all viable treatment options.
6. The College of Alberta Denturists is required to provide specific Standards for the profession. Such documents are adjunctive to these core Standards of Practice.



Standards of Practice

These Standards of Practice are broken into three core categories, those being:

1. Competency and Application of Knowledge

"Possessing the required abilities, knowledge, and skills necessary to safely, efficiently and effectively provide treatment to a patient"

2. Accountability

"Acknowledging and assuming responsibility for your actions and decisions"

3. Professionalism and Altruism

"The principle or practice of unselfish concern for the welfare of others"

STANDARD 1: Competency and Application of Knowledge

- i. Provide a suitable standard of care based on available up-to-date evidence-based information and best practices in the profession of denturism.
 - ii. Work within your knowledge, professional competence and physical abilities.
 - iii. Where appropriate, refer patients to other healthcare providers for required services that you are unable to provide.
 - iv. Apply the principles of general business including, but not limited to: accounting; recordkeeping; tax laws; employment and management requirements; insurance requirements; licensure and municipal/provincial/federal government requirements.
 - v. Continuously renew and expand your knowledge and skills by meeting the current Continuing Competency requirements of the *Denturists Profession Regulation*, and the College's Continuing Competency program and rules.
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STANDARD 2: Accountability

- i. Make and keep accurate and complete patient records by following the requirements contained in the current College of Alberta Denturists *Record Keeping Standards* document.
 - ii. Respect and ensure patients' rights to confidentiality of information.
 - iii. Ensure that all patient information is maintained and used in a manner such to comply with the *Health Information Act* and other privacy legislation.
 - iv. Maintain high levels of safety by adhering to the requirements contained in the current *College of Alberta Denturists Infection Prevention and Control Standards* document and the current Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Rules*.
 - v. Abide by all current legislation and regulations applicable to the profession of denturism in Alberta.
 - vi. Accept responsibility for your actions and those of all persons within your practice.
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STANDARD 3: Professionalism and Altruism

- i. Demonstrate - through example and behaviour - adherence to the College of Alberta Denturists Code of Ethics.
 - ii. Put the patients' interests before your own or those of any colleague, organization or business.
 - iii. In a manner consistent with the patient's ability to understand the information being given, provide full and accurate explanations and professional opinion concerning treatment options, their risks and benefits and associated costs.
 - iv. Respect the patient's right and ability to make informed choices regarding their dental care.
 - v. Maintain appropriate boundaries between professional therapeutic relationships and non-professional personal relationships.
 - vi. Communicate clearly and honestly with colleagues and patients.
 - vii. Support the profession, denturist education programs, denturist students and dental research.
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STANDARD 4: Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

DEFINITIONS

Adult interdependent partner means a person as defined in the *Adult Interdependent Relationships Act* (AIRA). A person is the adult interdependent partner of another person if

- a. the person who has lived with the other person in a relationship of interdependence
 - i. for a continuous period of not less than 3 years, or
 - ii. of some permanence, if there is a child of the relationship by birth or adoption, or
 - iii. the person has entered into an adult interdependent partner agreement with the other person under section 7 of AIRA.
- b. persons who are related to each other by blood or adoption may only become adult interdependent partners of each other by entering into an adult interdependent partner agreement with the other person.

Sexual abuse means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a regulated member towards a patient that is of a sexual nature and includes any of the following conduct:

- (i) sexual intercourse between a regulated member and a patient of that regulated member;
- (ii) genital to genital, genital to anal, oral to genital, or oral to anal contact between a regulated member and a patient of that regulated member;
- (iii) masturbation of a regulated member by, or in the presence of, a patient of that regulated member;
- (iv) masturbation of a regulated member's patient by that regulated member;
- (v) encouraged a regulated member's patient to masturbate in the presence of that regulated member;
- (vi) touching of a sexual nature of a patient's genitals, anus, breasts, or buttocks by a regulated member.

Sexual misconduct means any incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature by a regulated member towards a patient that the regulated member knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to the patient or adversely affect the patient's health and well-being but does not include sexual abuse

Sexual nature does not include any conduct, behaviour or remarks that are appropriate to the service provided.

Spouse is a person who is legally married to a dentist.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this standard of practice is to define who is considered to be a patient for the purposes of the sexual abuse and sexual misconduct provisions in the *Health Professions Act*.

THE DENTURIST-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

The dentist-client¹ relationship is formed when a dentist provides clinical dentist services to an individual.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROHIBITIONS

The dentist shall be responsible to establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries with clients at all times and understand the power imbalance that exists in favour of the dentist in dentist-client relationships.

A dentist shall never engage in sexual abuse of a client or engage in sexual misconduct towards a client.

The consequences of engaging in sexual abuse or sexual misconduct are:

1. If a dentist is found by a Hearing Tribunal appointed pursuant to the *Health Professions Act* to have committed unprofessional conduct based in whole or in part on sexual abuse of a patient, then the Hearing Tribunal must cancel the dentist's registration and practice permit. The dentist is never permitted to apply for reinstatement.
2. If a dentist is found by a Hearing Tribunal appointed pursuant to the *Health Professions Act* to have committed unprofessional conduct based in whole or in part on sexual misconduct towards a patient, then the Hearing Tribunal

¹ "client" is used to mean "patient" under the sexual abuse and sexual misconduct provisions in the *Health Professions Act*.

must at a minimum suspend their practice permit for a period of time determined by the Hearing Tribunal to be appropriate. The Hearing Tribunal can impose more severe sanctions than a suspension. If a dentist's registration and practice permit are cancelled because of "sexual misconduct" then the dentist cannot apply for reinstatement for at least five (5) years.

FORMER CLIENTS

During the two-year period following the end of the dentist-client relationship, a former client is considered to be a "patient" for the purposes of the sexual abuse and sexual misconduct provisions defined in the *Health Professions Act*. A dentist who engages in the type of conduct described in the definition of "sexual abuse" with, or "sexual misconduct" towards, a former client during the two-year period commits "sexual abuse" or "sexual misconduct" under the *Health Professions Act*. In the former case, if a Hearing Tribunal appointed pursuant to the *Health Professions Act* makes a finding of "sexual abuse", then the dentist's registration and practice permit must be cancelled.

PROVIDING DENTURIST SERVICES TO SPOUSES AND OTHERS

It is permissible for a dentist to provide professional dentist services to a spouse, interdependent partner or to an individual with which they are in an ongoing, pre-existing sexual relationship.

For the purposes of the sexual abuse provisions in the *Health Professions Act*, a person receiving professional services from a dentist is not considered to be a patient if the dentist is their spouse or adult interdependent partner or if they are in an ongoing, pre-existing sexual relationship with the dentist.

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